DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 123 293 UD 016 005

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TITLE The Racially Changing School: Negative Teacher Perceptions of Afro-American Students as a Response to Change, Rather Than "Cultural Difference".
PUB DATE Apr 76
NOTE 33p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, California, April 19-23, 1976)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS Bias; *Elementary School Teachers; Field Interviews; *Negro Students; Racial Balance; Racial Differences; *Role Perception; Social Differences; *Student Characteristics; Student Enrollment; Student Role; Suburban Schools; *Teacher Attitudes; Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS Illinois (Chicago)

ABSTRACT

The objective of the research reported here was to discover and describe two sets of categories used by teachers in perceiving and thinking about their students--one set common to all or nearly all teachers from inner-city schools with Afro-American enrollments; and the other set common to all or nearly all teachers from suburban schools with white, middle-class enrollments. Forty women were interviewed, all of whom were teachers of either the first or second grade in Chicago or one of Chicago's rapidly growing suburbs. Twenty teachers were interviewed from ten predominantly upper middle-class suburban public schools, with 98 percent or more white enrollments; twenty teachers were interviewed from thirteen predominantly lower-class inner-city public schools with 95 percent or more Afro-American enrollment, for the twelve to fifteen years preceding this study. The study failed to find the expected differences; teachers in racially stable suburban schools with white middle-class enrollments used the same cognitive categories in perceiving their students as did teachers in racially stable inner-city schools with lower-class Afro-American enrollments. It was inferred that it is the special circumstance of teaching in a racially changing or recently changed school which triggers an exaggeration by teachers of the perceived undesirable "differences" and "unteachability" of lower-class black students. (Author/JH)

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# The Racially Changing School: Negative Teacher Perceptions of Afro-American Students as a Response to Change, Rather than "Cultural Difference"

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## Abstract

A study aimed at identifying differences between primary-grade teachers of black inner-city and white suburban students, in the perceptual categories through which they perceived their students, failed to find the expected differences in schools which had not recently experienced change in the racial/social-class origin of students. Teachers in racially stable suburban schools with white middle-class enrollments used the same cognitive categories in perceiving their students as did teachers in racially stable inner-city schools with lower-class Afro-American enrollments. The findings here contrasted with earlier research showing that many teachers in urban schools changing from white to lower-class Afro-American enrollments perceived newly arriving students as different from, and much less desirable than their "old" students.

The finding here--that teachers did not perceive important differences between inner-city black students and white, suburban students, at least in the primary grades--was integrated with earlier research by inferring that it is the special circumstance of teaching in a racially changing or recently changed school which triggers an exaggeration by teachers of the perceived undesirable "differences" and "unteachability" of lower-class black students.

The tendency of teachers in racially stable schools to perceive students in the inner-city and the suburbs through the same general frame of reference, suggested that, normally, similarities in the structure and functioning of public schools in our society exert so powerful an impact on teacher cognitive processes, that these institutional pressures override any actual student cultural or achievement differences in shaping teachers' perceptions of their students.

# The Racially Changing School:
# Negative Teacher Perceptions of Afro-American Students as a Response to Change, Rather than "Cultural Difference"*

Recent changes in the racial and social-class composition of city school enrollments have created apprehension on the part of educators concerning our nation's capacity to staff inner-city schools with high-quality teachers. Reports in the educational literature of the 1950's and 1960's that good teachers were generally unwilling to teach in all-black low-income schools appeared just as inner-city school enrollments were becoming more and more heavily Afro-American, due to differential in- and out-migration rates for low-income blacks and middle-income whites. In the educational literature of the 1950's and 1960's, the reluctance of competent teachers to teach in black, inner-city schools was attributed to the "shock" experienced by teachers in trying to cope with the "alien culture" or "cultural deviance" seen as characterizing "difficult" inner-city schools and their "deprived," "maladjusted" students (Ausubel and Ausubel, 1963; Becker, 1952; Goldberg, 1964; Havighurst, 1966, pp. 157-166; Ravitz, 1963; Wagenschein, 1950). A solution was sometimes sought in the development of programs

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*This paper is based on a doctoral dissertation submitted to the University of Chicago. The research was partially supported by the University of Chicago's Early Education Research Center, funded by the United States Office of Education. The author wishes to thank Philip W. Jackson, J. W. Getzels, and John C. Glidewell for their many helpful suggestions in the conceptualization of the research; although the author takes full responsibility for the conclusions reached here.

designed specifically to prepare teachers for what was viewed as the specialized task of working with inner-city students (programs reviewed in Green, Bakan, McMillan, and Lezotte, 1973, pp. 612-615).

A review of the literature in the late 1960's, however, showed few serious accounts of the exact nature of the "differences" characterizing low-income black students, as perceived by professional classroom teachers. Those accounts of "differences" which had been published either reflected the ideas and perceptions of university professors, or appeared in popular paperbacks in which, typically, a romanticized account was given of the personal experience in an inner-city school of a young, non-career-oriented teacher who had abandoned teaching after a year or two of experience.

In contrast to the above two approaches to the description of "differences," the research reported here was designed to get at the perceptions of their students held by career-oriented teachers in inner-city schools with Afro-American enrollments, and to contrast these with the perceptions of their students held by career-oriented teachers in white, middle-class, suburban schools. It was predicted that there would be a substantial difference in the cognitive categories, or perceptual frame of reference, used by inner-city versus suburban teachers in perceiving and thinking about their students. It was anticipated that knowledge of the particular ways in which inner-city teachers perceive their students would permit inferences about the problems, stresses, and contradictions inner-city teachers experience between traditional classroom practice on the one hand, and the demands inherent in relating to and teaching inner-city black students on the other hand. In turn, knowledge of the special demands, stresses, and contradictions experienced by teachers of inner-city black students was viewed as potentially useful to teacher educators conducting programs aimed at

preparing teachers for careers in inner-city schools.

Since the objective of the present study was discovery of the perceptual categories through which teachers themselves customarily perceive and think about their students, the fixed-response questionnaire approach to data gathering, in which teachers would be required to respond to a set of researcher-selected categories, was considered inappropriate. Instead, "personal construct theory" as developed by the psychologist, George A. Kelly (1955), was judged as providing both a useful theoretical framework for the present study, and an appropriate interview technique for data gathering--the Role Construct Repertory Technique, or "Rep Test." This free-response interview technique makes it possible to elicit the conceptual repertoire of the interviewee within some particular cognitive domain specified by the interviewer. Hence, while the topic of focus here--teacher perceptions of their students--was selected by the interviewer, the actual interview was structured in such a way that the direction, form, and content of the congitive categories elicited were teacher-determined. Content analysis (Holsti, 1969) applied to the interviews conducted by the "Rep Test" technique offered a solution to the problem of preserving, in the results of the study, the integrity of the meanings contained in teachers' utterances, within interviews.

Since it was considered probable that students at widely separated grade levels present different social-stimulus values to their teachers, interviewing teachers of widely separated grade levels could have been expected to elicit differences in the perceptual categories used by teachers which were partly a function of grade taught, and not a function of teaching inner-city versus suburban students. For this reason, another decision made in the design of the present study involved restricting interviews to first

and second grade teachers only.

The objective of the research reported here was, then, the discovery and description of two sets of categories used by teachers in perceiving and thinking about their students--one set common to all, or nearly all teachers from inner-city schools with Afro-American enrollments; and the other set common to all, or nearly all teachers from suburban schools with white, middle-class enrollments. While it was predicted that considerable overlap would occur between inner-city and suburban teachers in the cognitive categories through which they perceived their students, it was expected that a significant number of categories would be used primarily by teachers in one of the two school settings, but not the other.

## Method

Forty women were interviewed, all of whom were teachers of either the first or second grade in Chicago or one of Chicago's rapidly growing suburbs. Twenty teachers were interviewed from ten predominantly upper-middle-class, suburban public schools, with 98 per cent or more white enrollments; and twenty teachers were interviewed from thirteen predominantly lower-class, inner-city public schools, with 95 per cent or more Afro-American enrollment, for the twelve to fifteen years preceding this study. Participating teachers were recruited in three ways: 1) through friends, wives of friends, and evening graduate students of the investigator; 2) recommendations from teachers already interviewed; and 3) advertisement in the newspaper of the Chicago Teachers Union.[1] Teachers were paid for participation in the study.

### Interview Procedure

Teachers were interviewed individually, in one or two sessions, by the author of this report. Interview time varied from two hours to three hours for each interview. Thirty-four interviews were tape recorded, and six were recorded in writing, verbatim, by the interviewer. The "Rep Test" technique

adopted from Kelly (1955, Vol. I, pp. 219-244), was used in the following way: A teacher wrote the names of each of the students in her current class on 3-by-5-inch cards--one name on each card. Two versions of the Rep Test technique were then used to obtain teacher perceptual constructs.

Free sorts. After the teacher had written the names of her students on cards, the cards were shuffled and spread out before her. The interviewer gave the following instructions.

> Sort your children into groups in some way that seems important to you. You may put as many or as few children into each group as you wish, and you may have as many or as few groups as you wish.

When sorting was complete, the interviewer said,

> Tell me on what basis you sorted your children into groups. With which group shall we begin?

Teachers' descriptions of groups were recorded. After the teacher completed descriptions of the groups in her first free sort, student name cards were gathered up, shuffled, and again spread out. Free-sort directions were repeated, and a second sort and set of descriptions of groups obtained. This process was continued until the teacher had completed six free sorts, or until two hours of the interview time had elapsed.

Trios. On completion of the free-sort phase of the interview, the student name cards were gathered up, shuffled, and numbered. Then, referring to a table of random numbers, the interviewer selected a random trio of student names. The three names were placed before the teacher, and the interviewer said,

> Now I would like you to tell me something about <u>these</u> three students. In what important way are two of them alike, but different from the third?

Teacher replies were recorded. Next the three name cards were replaced in the packet, and another trio of student names was selected on the basis

of a table of random numbers, and similarities and differences perceived by the teacher were recorded. This process was repeated until the three-hour time limit placed on the interview was reached, or until twenty trio descriptions had been obtained.

Analysis of Interviews

A "content analysis" (Gerbner, Holsti, Krippendorff, Paisley and Stone, 1969; Holsti, 1969) was performed on the interview typescripts. Since the categories according to which the interviews were to be analyzed were not pre-selected by the investigator, they had to be generated from the interview typescripts. This was done by randomly selecting twelve teacher interviews, and having them separately analyzed by two judges, for "every separable unit of meaning" as described in Appendix A to this report. The two judges then met to resolve any differences in categorization. Decisions concerned the presence or absence of a category in an interview, and not the frequency with which the category appeared in an interview. The "standards" used to define a construct were, then, exact words and phrases taken from teacher interviews.

The 154 categories obtained in this way were then used by two judges as a basis for analyzing all forty interview typescripts. Judges ascertained the presence or absence of each of the categories in each interview. To remain in the pool of common constructs, a category had to be present in either 80 per cent of city-teacher interviews, or 80 per cent of suburban-teacher interviews. Constructs were dropped as they fell below the 80 per cent criterion; or, in some cases were aggregated to form a new, broader category.

Assessment of Control and Independent Variables

Two control variables and eleven independent variables were also

assessed for each teacher. The two control variables were "School and classroom climate" assessed by the Doll Checklist of School Types (Doll, 1969; Havighurst, 1966, pp. 92-95), and "Satisfaction with teaching position" assessed by two multiple choice questions reproduced in Appendix B to this report.

Eight of the independent variables were assessed by means of a self-report questionnaire administered at the conclusion of each interview (reproduced in Appendix B to this report). Information was requested concerning each teacher's

Class size
School size
Age
Teaching experience
Size community of origin
Socioeconomic class origin
Education and college grades
Marital status.

Other independent variables assessed through direct observation, or questioning before the interview, were

School location
Grade taught
Racial origin.

## Results and Conclusions

### Control and Independent Variables

Results from assessment of the two control variables showed no significant difference between city- and suburban-teacher groups in "satisfaction with teaching position." Nearly all teachers in both groups reported themselves "satisfied"--a replication of Havighurst's finding of satisfaction among women elementary teachers in Chicago public schools at all socioeconomic levels (1964, pp. 341; 344-45). A difference was found between city and suburban teachers in their perceptions of the "School and classroom climate" in their own schools. The average suburban teacher viewed her school as closer to

the "highly academically oriented" end of the Doll Checklist of School Types (Doll, 1969; Havighurst, 1966, pp. 92-95), while the average inner-city teacher viewed her school and classroom as closer to the "average academic" or "low academic" end of the climate scale, and as having somewhat more in the way of "problems" ($p < .01$).

With respect to independent variables, significant differences were found between city and suburban teachers for only two variables--Age and Racial origin ($p < .05$). As shown in Table 1, city teachers were older (mean age of 30.6 years for city teachers, and 26.3 years for suburban teachers),

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Insert Table 1 about here

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and a sizeable minority of them were Afro-American (six Afro-Americans in the city sample of twenty teachers, versus none among the twenty suburban teachers). Despite the non-random selection of teachers, the inner-city sample of teachers reported here was almost identical with the population of elementary teachers in Chicago "lower-class or slum" schools reported in the survey of Chicago public school teachers by Havighurst (1964, pp. 342, 417-419), on every independent variable assessed in both studies, with the exception of the absence of men teachers in the present study.

It is more difficult to determine the degree to which the suburban sample was representative of suburban teachers in general, due to the lack of statistical profiles of suburban teachers in varying types of suburbs (those growing rapidly in population, versus those static in population growth, for example). However, it seems probable that the youth, inexperience, and predominantly lower-middle-class origin of suburban teachers here (see Table 1) accurately reflected the characteristics of teachers in rapidly growing suburbs, during the teacher shortage of the 1960's.

Dependent Variables: Common Constructs

Content analysis yielded thirty-nine constructs common to at least sixteen of twenty (80 per cent) of city interviews, or sixteen of twenty (80 per cent) of suburban interviews. These results are shown in Table 2, along with the finding of only two significant differences in the frequency

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Insert Table 2 about here

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with which constructs were mentioned by city versus suburban teachers. Since chance fluctuations could have been expected to produce two "significant differences" among thirty-nine tests of significance at the .05 probability level, it was concluded that city and suburban teachers perceived students through substantially the same frame of reference, or set of categories in the present study.

This conclusion was reinforced when those twenty-seven constructs were examined which had originally been scored directionally for all teachers. Statistical analysis showed similar distributions of responses at either pole for all twenty-seven of these constructs. For example, Construct 31, "Aggressive versus nonaggressive," showed and incidence of seventeen city teachers perceiving "aggressive" behavior in their students and eleven mentioning the other pole--nonaggressive behavior. The figures for suburban teachers were fifteen and four respectively. (Difference between city and suburban teachers for this construct: $\chi^2 = 1.58$, n.s.). Both inner-city and suburban teachers were also equally likely to perceive their classes as containing "good readers," "average readers," and "poor readers;" "students who try hard" and "students who couldn't care less;" and so on through the twenty-seven constructs scored directionally. These findings suggested that teachers did not use an absolute standard in perceiving

their students. Rather, when not constrained by response format to perceive in absolute terms, teachers appeared to automatically perceive their students in relative terms--that is, relative to the other students in their classrooms.[2] Since no significant differences, specific to polarity were found between the responses of city and suburban teachers, figures on directionality of responses have not been reported here. Hence in this report a teacher listed as showing Construct 31, "Aggressive versus nonaggressive," in her interview may have mentioned either physically aggressive or nonaggressive behavior in her students, or both.

## Discussion

The results reported here did not confirm the major expectation with which the present study was begun--that content analysis of teacher interviews would yield clear differences between inner-city and suburban teachers in the constructs or categories through which they perceived their students. Though some differences were found between the two groups of teachers, differences failed to reach an acceptable level of significance. While care must be taken in interpreting findings of "no difference" between groups, it is appropriate to ask whether the present findings may have been a function of readily apparent differences between the present study and those studies of the 1950's and 1960's which reported negative teacher perceptions of lower-class Afro-American students.

The research reported here differed from earlier studies in that teachers here were drawn from primary-grade classrooms only, and teachers may be less likely to perceive younger, than older low-income Afro-American students as "different" or "undesirable." Second, and more important, schools from which teachers were recruited in the present study were all located in neighborhoods that were racially stable, and had been racially stable for

at least twelve to fifteen years. A survey of earlier research on teacher devaluation of low-income black students showed that these reports came primarily from teachers in schools which were experiencing, or had recently experienced, racial change--from white to low-income Afro-American enrollments (Becker, 1951, 1952; Gottlieb, 1964; Havighurst, 1966, pp. 157-166; Stanek, 1961; Wagenschein, 1950).[3] Two social psychological theories appear particularly powerful in predicting how teaching in a school "changing" from white to Afro-American could lead first, to the exaggeration of perceived black student "differences," and second, to the rejection of these perceived differences as undesirable. These two theories are the Sherifs' social judgment theory (Sherif, Sherif, and Nebergall, 1965; Sherif and Hovland, 1961), and "labeling" theory (Lofland, 1969; Erickson, 1964; Lemert, 1967), as developed out of the symbolic interactionist perspective. The Sherifs argue that all individuals possess an internalized scale of social judgment on the basis of which they evaluate others. When presented with a new social stimulus, somewhat outside previous common experience, the individual either shifts his standard, or perception of the "normal and familiar" toward the new stimulus-- a process called "assimilation"-- or shifts his standard, or perception of the "normal and familiar" away from the new stimulus-- a process called "contrast" (Sherif, Sherif and Nebergall, 1965, pp. 14-17; 127-133). Further, the Sherifs have suggested that under conditions of high personal and emotional concern with a new social stimulus, the liklihood of occurrence of the "contrast" effect is increased. A highly emotion-laden change is more likely to lead to rejection of the new stimulus as "undesirable" and "abnormal" (pp. 55-59).

As applied to the issue of racial change in schools, it can be assumed

that lower-class Afro-American students, entering a formerly white school as "new" students, do exhibit some level of difference to which the teacher must respond. The question becomes one of whether the teacher's perceptual and social judgment process leads to the inclusion ("assimilation") of the new Afro-American students as "similar to, and only slightly different from the 'old' students;" or whether the teacher's perceptual and social judgment process leads to the exclusion ("contrast effect") of the new Afro-American students as "undesirable," "very different from the old students," and having no legitimate place in a "good school." If the Sherifs are correct that a high level of emotional involvement with a social change predisposes the individual toward rejection of the change, then teachers in racially changing schools would be more likely to reject and depreciate their Afro-American students, than would teachers in racially stable Afro-American schools.[4] This would follow from the inevitable exposure of teachers to the emotionally arousing rhetoric of fear, anxiety, and hostility which has surrounded racial change in most American schools.

The perspective on the origin of social deviance expressed in "labeling" theory leads to conclusions similar to those of social judgment theory, with respect to the issue of teacher perception of "new" Afro-American students in a racially changing school. Labeling theory's version of the circumstances under which one individual successfully labels another as "different" or "deviant" involves a situation which is perceived by the more powerful person as a threat to his status or to the pursuit of his objectives. Often this threat takes place within the context of "rapid social change and terratorial mobility" producing "a situation in which persons have little information about each other....Under conditions of mistrust and fear, the safest course is to presume the worst" (Lofland, 1969, p. 143); that

is, for the individual with more social power to respond to a new and unpredictable interpersonal situation by "coding" the person with less social power as "deviant" or "different" (p. 142). Once the previously unfamiliar individual has been labeled as different or undesirable on the basis of meagre evidence, the pressure for cognitive consistency leads to selective perception, says Lofland, so that only behavior which confirms the original label is noticed or remembered (pp. 148-151).

Since all teachers in the present study were drawn from racially stable schools, the Sherifs' social judgment theory and Lofland's labeling theory may help account for the finding here of no substantial differences in teacher perceptual frame of reference toward middle-class white versus lower-class Afro-American students. Neither the Sherifs' "contrast effect" nor Lofland's "distrust and fear" engendered by "rapid social change" in schools were operating, as they had been in the few studies of teacher perceptions of black students reported in the 1950's and 1960's.

In summary, the finding here that teachers tended to use the same constructs in perceiving both black and white children, suggests that the "differences" reported between Afro-American lower-class and white middle-class children in recent years may have been an artifact of teacher reaction to racial change taking place in urban school enrollments. The question of whether or not there are, objectively, substantial differences between lower-class Afro-American and middle-class white students was not addressed in the present study, and would in any case depend for an answer on the frame of reference of the observer.[5] What the results of the present study do suggest is that teachers' perceptions of students are shaped along common lines in response to the cumulative impact on teachers of exposure to the standard school and classroom environment of American elementary schools.

This shaping of teacher perceptions may well develop through much the same process described by Adams and Biddle as the institutional "coercion" of the behavior of teachers and students into predictable, routinized, rul - governed patterns (1970, pp. 49-69).

Finally it should be noted that the conclusions drawn from the present study are post hoc and based on a finding of "no difference" between two groups. The risk of improper interpretation under these circumstances is considerable. Hence, the conclusion and implications reported here should be treated as hypotheses in need of testing, and as meriting consideration at this stage of research only because of their implications for a serious issue facing our schools at the present time--racial integration.

## Educational Implications

The results of the present study suggest first that teacher perceptions of inner-city students in racially stable Afro-American schools may be much more similar to teacher perceptions of white middle-class suburban students than had been recognized in the educational literature, where attention to inner-city teachers has tended to focus on those teachers in schools experiencing racial change--an emphasis that is hardly surprising considering the salience for contemporary Americans of the issues surrounding racial change in urban schools.

The results of the present study also suggest that there may be no "special" problem of improving teaching in inner-city Afro-American schools, but that improvement of teaching in such schools may more accurately be viewed as part of the general problem of improving teaching practices in American schools. On the basis of the present study, it has been inferred that the "special" problem of teaching lower-income black students occurs primarily in one particular school setting--the school which has recently

experienced, or is experiencing racial change. If substantiated by further research, this conclusion suggests the critical importance of preparing teachers in racially changing schools to anticipate and prepare themselves to handle the human tendency to exaggerate the perceived differences and "deviance" of newcomers, under the stressful conditions currently accompanying racial change in American schools. The possibility of desegregation, or change of a school enrollment from white to all-black, which is not accompanied by teacher flight or teacher depreciation of newcomers, appears to depend in part on the degree to which school systems consciously and explicitly plan for change--providing principals and teachers with the additional specialized resources required to meet such change. The same general principle may also apply to the integration of teacher staffs in schools in which the faculty has previously been racially homogeneous. That is, only an adequate program alerting principals and teachers to the tendency to exaggerate the perceived differences of newcomers under emotionally charged conditions of social change, can prevent or at least diminish antagonism which is otherwise likely to be generated toward "new" teachers whose appearance in a school has been mandated by federal law.

Finally, while surely not contraindicated by the present study, specialized training programs for those planning to teach in inner-city schools do not appear to address the problem outlined here, of teacher's tendency to devalue "new" students, under stressful circumstances of change in the student enrollment of a school.

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## Footnotes

[1]Official channels were not used for obtaining cooperating teachers. A wide selection of suburban teachers representing different school districts was sought, multiplying excessively the number of official contacts which would have been needed. In the city, the approval of the Chicago Public Schools was sought at the district level, to permit entering selected schools to solicit volunteers. No reply was received to this request. In view of the reported tendency of principals to direct researchers to a homogeneous group of teachers, of high-achieving classes (Brickell, 1974), the failure to obtain teacher-subjects through official channels was not viewed as a particular handicap in the conduct of the present study.

[2]A related finding was reported in a study by Haberman and Raths (1968) in which teachers were observed to label about the same number of students "gifted" and "remedial" from each hypothetical classroom they were asked to judge, even though the ranges, means, and distributions of achievement scores ascribed to students in the hypothetical classes by the research design, differed markedly. That is, when the research design did not confine teachers to use of an absolute standard of judgment, teachers spontaneously based their categorizations of students on a relative standard, as was found in the present study.

[3]In the one report found in the literature which resembled the present study (in that teacher-subjects were recruited from racially-stable white and racially-stable black schools) substantially the same results were reported as those found here: "In this study the similarities found between [teachers' perceptions] of the two racial groups appear more striking than the differences" (Long and Henderson, 1971). The study by Long and Henderson asked teachers to rate their first grade students on twenty-four "behaviors," many of which overlapped with teacher constructs found in the present study. Despite the difference in response format used in the two studies, and the fact that Long and Henderson's teachers taught in rural schools in the southeastern United States, teachers in these racially stable schools judged white and black children similarly, as did the teachers of the present study.

[4]It seems probable that the teacher in a school which is changing from a white to a lower-class black student body is far more likely to respond to Afro-American students with the "contrast" or rejection effect than is the teacher who teaches in a school that has been racially stable for some time--either racially integrated at a stable level, or composed entirely of Afro-American students. First, the teacher in the racially stable school experiences no "change" to which she must respond. Hence "differences" are less sharply etched by context since, to use the language of perceptual theory, she does not experience changing figure ("new" students) against

constant ground (the classroom, halls, schoolgrounds, and so on). Also, in a racially stable school, she will encounter a colleague culture which is likely to take for granted the appropriateness of the characteristics of the students, since there has been no recent in-school challenge to that perspective. Finally, in the context of a racially stable school composed entirely of Afro-American students and a substantial number of Afro-American colleagues, the arriving teacher is the "newcomer" seeking acceptance from students and colleagues, rather than the reverse--presumably putting her under some pressure to move in the direction of adoption of the norms within her school, concerning perceptions of students.

[5]The conclusion that actual differences between Afro-Americans and whites are not large is supported by a recent study of adults which demonstrated greater "psychocultural similarity" between Afro-American and white American workers, than between white students and white workers in the United States. That is, social class was found to be a stronger determinant than race, of the values and beliefs of adult Americans (Szalay + Bryson, 1973).

Table 1

Teacher Characteristics

| Variable Name | | School Location: City | School Location: Suburbs | Statistical Test |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Categorical Variables | | | | |
| School location | City | 20 | 0 | Unnecessary, difference obvious. |
| | Suburbs | 0 | 20 | |
| Grade taught | 1st grade | 11 | 10 | $\chi^2$=.11; n.s. 2 df |
| | 2nd grade | 7 | 8 | |
| | Split 1st & 2nd | 2 | 2 | |
| Racial origin | Afro-American | 6 | 0 | $\chi^2_c$=4.90; $p < .05$. 1 df |
| | Non-Afro | 14 | 20 | |
| Size community of origin | Large city | 12 | 10 | $\chi^2$=1.19; n.s. 3 df |
| | City | 2 | 3 | |
| | Small city | 4 | 3 | |
| | Town or farm | 2 | 4 | |
| Socio-economic class origin | Upper middle | 5 | 5 | $\chi^2$=3.40; n.s. 2 df[a] |
| | Lower middle | 4 | 9 | |
| | Working | 8 | 6 | |
| | Lower | 3 | 0 | |
| Education and college grades | Excellent | 2 | 1 | $\chi^2$=.62; n.s. 2 df[a] |
| | Good | 6 | 8 | |
| | Average | 7 | 8 | |
| | Below average | 5 | 3 | |
| Marital status | Single | 8 | 4 | $\chi^2_c$=1.07; n.s. 1 df |
| | Ever married | 12 | 16 | |
| Continuous Variables | | | | |
| Class size | Mean | 25.4 | 26.9 | Variance $F^b$= 4.26; $p < .01$. 19, 19 df |
| | sd | 6.2 | 3.0 | Means t = .97; n.s. 19 df |

Table 1--Continued

| Variable Name | | School Location: City | School Location: Suburbs | Statistical Test |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| School size[c] | Mean | 9.5 | 8.6 | Variance $F$ = 3.79; $p < .01$. 19, 19 df |
| | sd | 3.6 | 1.9 | Means $t$ = .96; n.s. 19 df |
| Teacher age | Mean | 30.6 | 26.3 | Variance $F$ = 2.22; n.s. 19, 19 df |
| | sd | 7.5 | 5.0 | Means $t$ = 2.09; $p < .05$. 38 df |
| Teaching experience | Mean | 5.7 | 4.1 | Variance $F$ = 2.44; n.s. 19, 19 df |
| | sd | 5.0 | 3.2 | Means $t$ = .91; n.s. 38 df |

Note.--In the cases of the Class size and School size variables, $t$ tests were performed on differences between means even though significant differences in variances were found between city and suburban groups. In these two cases, the table of $t$ was entered with one half the usual number of degrees of freedom, as suggested by Edwards (1961, p. 272).

[a]Adjacent categories grouped in application of chi square test, to ensure that no expected frequency dropped below two (Guilford and Fruchter, 1973, pp. 204-205).

[b]Homogeneity of variance $F$ test.

[c]Number of first and second grade classrooms in each teacher's school was used as the measure of "School size."

Table 2

Construct Frequency Among City and Suburban Teachers

(Constructs Common to Interviews of Sixteen or More City and/or Suburban Teachers)

| Construct Number | Construct Name | Number of Interviews Containing Construct | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | City only | Suburbs only | Total |
| 1 | Reading achievement | 20 | 20 | 40 |
| 2 | Math achievement | 16 | 19 | 35 |
| 3 | Handwriting | 9 | 16 | 25 |
| 4 | Art | 11 | 16 | 27 |
| 5 | Grade level | 18 | 19 | 37 |
| 6 | Attendance | 16* | 6* | 22 |
| 7 | Auxiliary personnel[a] | 16 | 14 | 30 |
| 8 | General school progress | 20 | 20 | 40 |
| 9 | Maturation level | 17 | 20 | 37 |
| 10 | Academic aptitude | 20 | 20 | 40 |
| 11 | Ability-achievement gap | 17 | 16 | 33 |
| 12 | School attitude | 15 | 17 | 32 |
| 13 | Speed of learning | 19 | 20 | 39 |
| 14 | Attention span | 18 | 18 | 36 |
| 15 | Speed of paperwork | 18 | 19 | 37 |
| 16 | Effort | 19 | 20 | 39 |

Table 2--Continued

| Construct Number | Construct Name | Number of Interviews Containing Construct | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | City only | Suburbs only | Total |
| 17 | Neatness vs. messiness | 8 | 17 | 25 |
| 18 | Independent vs. dependent | 18 | 19 | 37 |
| 19 | Talking: Quantity | 18 | 20 | 38 |
| 20 | Talking: Quality | 13 | 18 | 31 |
| 21 | Child's sex | 20 | 20 | 40 |
| 22 | Illness, speech problem | 18 | 17 | 35 |
| 23 | Activity level | 12 | 18 | 30 |
| 24 | Mood | 16 | 17 | 33 |
| 25 | Obedience vs. disobedience | 20 | 20 | 40 |
| 26 | Response to problems | 18 | 17 | 35 |
| 27 | Self-confidence | 11 | 18 | 29 |
| 28 | Outgoing vs. shy | 13 | 19 | 32 |
| 29 | Popular vs. unpopular | 18 | 17 | 35 |
| 30 | Withdrawn, "loner" | 16 | 14 | 30 |
| 31 | Aggressive vs. nonaggressive[b] | 17 | 15 | 32 |
| 32 | Attractive vs. unattractive | 18 | 11 | 29 |
| 33 | Personal interaction w/ teacher[c] | 11 | 16 | 27 |
| 34 | Home care | 19 | 16 | 35 |
| 35 | Serious hardship | 18* | 7* | 25 |
| 36 | Description of parents | 20 | 18 | 38 |
| 37 | Dress | 16 | 7 | 23 |

Table 2--Continued

| Construct Number | Construct Name | Number of Interviews Containing Construct | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | City only | Suburbs only | Total |
| 38 | Family size, birth order | 18 | 13 | 31 |
| 39 | Parent contact | 16 | 9 | 25 |

[a]Refers to the school professionals and aides, in addition to regular classroom teachers, mentioned by teacher-subjects while giving their perceptions of their students. Examples of sentences appearing in the final scoring standards for Construct seven were: "I didn't know he really thought much of his family until the social worker told me." "The teacher-nurse is working on it to see if she can get some kind of report on the child from her doctor."

[b]Refers to physical aggression, or its absence, in their students, as perceived by teachers.

[c]Construct 33 is best characterized by a few examples of sentences appearing in the final scoring standards for that construct: "Both these children have sought me out to talk about very personal things." "He'll sit and he's just looking at me--like I was an idol or something, you know." "I never can get very close to her; I don't feel that I know her at all."

*$p < .05$, chi-square test.

## Appendix A

### Content Analysis of Twelve Randomly Selected Interview Typescripts

For each of twelve interview typescripts--six randomly selected from among city teacher interviews, and six randomly selected from among suburban teacher interviews--two judges were instructed to "extract every separable unit of meaning present in each interview;" and to write each new meaning unit on a separate 3-by-5-inch card.

Two considerations prompted use of this molecular approach to the extraction of constructs from interviews. First, the goal of preserving the teachers' thought patterns precluded the use of discriminative judgments on the part of judges that some meaning units were "important" and should be listed, while others should not. The other reason for taking a molecular or "fine-category" approach to content analysis has been well phrased by Holsti. If, in the process of content analysis, some categories "become so narrow that most of them will be used only once," then "it is possible to aggregate categories. On the other hand the investigator who discovers his initial categories are so broad that important distinctions are lost cannot disaggregate results without completely recoding the data" (Holsti, 1969, p. 98).

The analysis outlined above yielded meaning units or constructs which ranged in length from one or two words to several sentences. In other words, "units" in the present study consisted of themes, or separable concepts. The following three rules were applied to the process of analysis by the two judges: 1) One meaning unit was written on each card, except

when ideas were encountered which replicated earlier meaning units. Replications were added to the card on which the construct in question had first appeared; 2) No restriction was placed on the number of ideas that could be represented by a single word or phrase; and 3) Kelly's conception of constructs as bipolar was employed, with the result that those meaning units which could vary in direction were listed on the same card.

In order to illustrate the application of the above rules, the following example is given of the ways in which four phrases were classified. The four phrases were

a very bright boy
girls who are conscientious workers (academic context)
intellectually he's not capable of keeping up
tries very hard (academic context)

These four phrases were assigned to three different cards as follows,

Card 1: Academic aptitude

a very bright boy
intellectually he's not capable of keeping up

Card 2: Child's sex

a very bright boy
girls who are conscientious workers

Card 3: Effort

girls who are conscientious workers
tries very hard

Using the above method, all constructs discernible to the two judges were extracted from the twelve randomly selected interviews. Next, the two judges worked together in resolving differences in category definition which had arisen during their independent analyses of the twelve randomly selected typescripts. Together, judges listed their differences in classification. They returned to the original transcripts to check contexts, and agreed on a final reclassification of the words and phrases at issue. Once

again, the molecular criterion of "smallest possible unit of meaning" was applied in generating categories. The two judges agreed on the extraction of 154 categories common to the interviews of two or more of the twelve interviews analyzed. These 154 constructs, as operationally defined by their constituent lists of teacher words or phrases, became the standard categories used for later re-analysis of the first twelve transcripts, and for analysis of the remaining twenty-eight teacher interviews.

Appendix B

Questions Used in the Assessment of One Control

and Eight Independent Variables

Two Questions Used in Assessing the Control Variable,

"Satisfaction with Teaching Position"

1. How would you rate your satisfaction with your present teaching position?

   A. Love it. Completely satisfied. (4 points)
   B. Generally satisfied and enjoy my work. (3 points)
   C. Overall, I'm more satisfied than dissatisfied. (2 points)
   D. Overall, I'm more dissatisfied than satisfied. (1 point)
   E. I'm quite seriously unhappy with my teaching position.
   F. I can hardly stand it. I have to force myself to school each day.

2. Would you like to move to a school in a "better neighborhood?"

   A. Extremely anxious to move to such a school.
   B. Would very much like to move. (1 point)
   C. Some desire to move. (2 points)
   D. Not especially anxious to move. (3 points)
   E. Would not want to move to such a school. (4 points)

Since no teacher checked alternatives E or F for question one, or alternative A for question two, the results from the two questions were simply added to produce a scale from 2 (moderately dissatisfied) to 8 (extremely satisfied).

Questions Used in the Assessment

of Eight Independent Variables

1. How many students do you have in your present class? _____. (Class size)

2. How many first and second grade classes do you have in your school? _____. (School size)

3. Age? _____. (Age)

4. Total years of teaching experience in all schools? _____. (Teaching experience)

5. In what type of community did you spend the major part of your youth? (Size community of origin)

   A. Farm.
   B. Village or town (under 10,000).
   C. Small city (10,000 to 50,000).
   D. City (50,000 to 500,000).
   E. Large city (500,000 or more).

6. What was your father's major lifetime occupation? (The first of four questions used to assess socio-economic class origin)

   A. Professional. (4 points)
   B. Managerial, executive, or proprietor of large business. (4 points)
   C. Small business owner or manager. (3 points)
   D. Clerical or sales. (3 points)
   E. Farm owner or renter. (2 points)
   F. Skilled worker or foreman. (2 points)
   G. Semiskilled worker. (1 point)
   H. Unskilled worker or farm laborer. (1 point)

7. What was your father's highest educational attainment?

   A. College graduate or higher. (4 points)
   B. Some college. (3 points)
   C. High school graduate. (2 points)
   D. Some high school. (1 point)
   E. Elementary school or less. (1 point)

8. What was your mother's highest educational attainment?

   A. College graduate or higher. (4 points)
   B. Some college. (3 points)
   C. High school graduate. (2 points)
   D. Some high school. (1 point)
   E. Elementary school or less. (1 point)

9. What was the income position of your parents at the time of your graduation from high school?

   A. Highest 25% of our community. (4 points)
   B. Second highest 25% of our community. (3 points)
   C. Third highest 25% of our community. (2 points)
   D. Lowest 25% of our community. (1 point)

10. What is your highest degree? (The first of two questions used to assess Education and grades)

   A. Less than B.A. (1 point)
   B. B.A. or B.S. (2 points)

C. Bachelor's degree plus some graduate work. (3 points)
D. M.A. or M.S. (4 points)
E. Master's plus additional graduate work. (4 points)

11. During your four years of college, were you an

A. outstanding student. (4 points)
B. good student (B average). (3 points)
C. average student. (2 points)
D. poor student. (1 point)

12. Marital status: Single___ Married___ Divorced___ Widowed___.
(Marital status)

An average of the scores on questions six, seven, eight, and nine, was used as an indication of Socio-economic class origin. An average of the scores on questions ten and eleven was used as an indication of Education and grades. In scoring question twelve, Marital status, teachers were coded as falling into one of two categories--single or ever-married.

Inclusion of a number of the independent variables assessed in the present study was based on the work of Havighurst and Neugarten (1967), Herriott and St. John (1966) and Ryans (1960). The work of these authors has called attention to important correlates, in teacher attitudes and behavior, of several of the independent variables assessed here.